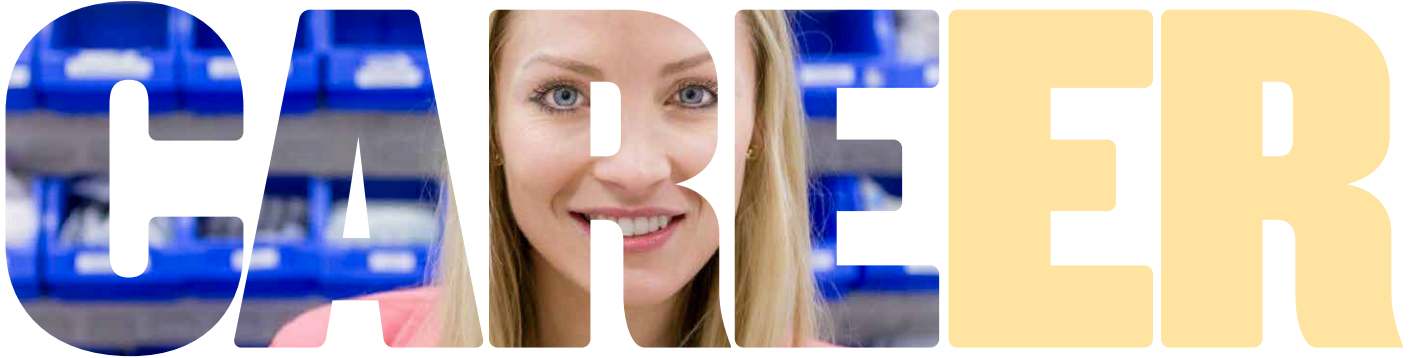


# Be amazing in your

# CAREER



Nurses exploring a career in **mental health nursing** will discover a variety of interesting and exciting roles. MHN is a specialised branch of nursing which requires a particular set of skills, attitudes and knowledge that focuses on the care of people with mental health concerns.

## Mental health problems such as

- Anxiety and depression
- Mood disorders
- Psychosis or Schizophrenia
- Personality Disorders
- Eating Disorders
- Problematic alcohol or drug use

Mental health nursing is a specialised branch of nursing with a focus on the care of people with mental illness or distress. Mental health nurses work with their clients to promote psychological well-being, emotional health and physical well-being. This can be working with their clients to understand their mental health conditions, to learn how to manage their symptoms and be aware of what can exacerbate their mental health condition.

Mental health nurses work with clients who suffer from conditions like anxiety, depression, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder and many others.

The World Health Organisation identified that one in four people will experience a mental disorder at some point in their life and, as such mental health nurses work with people from all cultures, religions and socio-economic backgrounds.

Collaboration is essential to good mental health practice, so mental health nurses work collaboratively with a range of other health professionals, including other nurses, doctors, psychologists and other allied health professionals, as part of a multidisciplinary team.

Advocacy is an important aspect of nursing, and particularly in mental health nursing. People with mental health conditions are often stigmatized and marginalized in our communities.

## What do I need to do to become a Mental Health Nurse?

**Enrolled Nurses:** if you are thinking about your options once you complete your nursing course or you are already an Enrolled nurse you can seek employment in a Mental Health Service. Once you have gained skills and knowledge in MHN you can consider study in the Advanced Diploma of Nursing specialising in Mental Health.

**Registered Nurses:** if you are an undergraduate Bachelor of Nursing student you could request a MHN setting for your transition to employment. Once qualified and working in a mental health service you can pursue post graduate qualifications in MHN.

**MHN is a career that can match your lifestyle by offering varied working hours and the flexibility of working full or part time leaving time for family life, travel and other commitments.**

### Where do MHNs work?

Mental health nursing offers many diverse and rewarding career opportunities. MHNs work with individuals, families and communities within a variety of health care settings including hospitals, community aged care and forensic settings.

MHNs can work in acute and emergency care. For example Psychiatric Emergency Care Centres (PECC)s. PECCs are now available in a number of hospital emergency units. The PECC is a short stay hospital unit, which aims to reduce and avoid hospital admission and/or premature discharge, providing short term assessment and intervention aiming for a rapid return to a person's community with supportive follow up by GP's, psychologists, psychiatrists or community mental health nurses.

MHN is varied and interesting. There are a range of skills that mental health nurses require, such as mental health promotion and prevention, mental health assessment and interventions, specialist counselling and psychotherapy, medication management, direct nursing care, education and training, and research and evaluation.

MHNs also work in the community as a vital member of continuum of care teams providing ongoing recovery focused treatment and support.

A MHN with a keen interest in progressing his/her career can consider advanced clinical positions such as Clinical Nurse Consultant or Nurse Practitioner. Nurse Practitioners (NP) are educated and endorsed to function autonomously and collaboratively in an advanced extended clinical role. NP's work with individual families and communities within a variety of health care settings including hospitals, community health settings and GP practices.

Within MHN there is also the option of moving into education, research or a management-based role.

### Study Support

Scholarships are available to ENs and RNs who are working in full or part time permanent positions in the NSW Public Health System. Applications can be made for a scholarship if you are undertaking MHN study program leading to a qualification. See the Nursing and Midwifery Office website for application information and closing dates.

### Why not take up the challenge and enjoy working with people

If you're interested in an exciting and dynamic career in MHN or simply want more information, you may find the following details helpful:

#### Nursing & Midwifery Office

[www.health.nsw.gov.au/nursing](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/nursing)

[www.health.nsw.gov.au/nursing/practitioner/nurse\\_practitioner.asp](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/nursing/practitioner/nurse_practitioner.asp)

[nursingcareers@doh.health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:nursingcareers@doh.health.nsw.gov.au)

#### Universities Admissions Centre

[www.uac.edu.au](http://www.uac.edu.au)

#### TAFE NSW

[www.tafensw.edu.au](http://www.tafensw.edu.au)

#### Australian College of Mental Health Nurses

[www.acmhn.org](http://www.acmhn.org)

#### NSW Institute of Psychiatry

[www.nswiop.nsw.edu.au](http://www.nswiop.nsw.edu.au)

#### Drug and Alcohol Nurses of Australasia

[www.danaonline.org](http://www.danaonline.org)

**If you would like to discover the types of jobs available for registered and Enrolled Nurses in MHN positions have a look at the employment section of the NSW Health website at:**

[www.health.nsw.gov.au/jobs](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/jobs)

 **Become a Registered Nurse** and see the difference you make, everyday.